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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 9457
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 5340
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 3588
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 7104
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3551
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009

In Today's Papers

Chador Fails for CHP, New Hope in Quran Classes (Vatan)
Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Zaman, Radikal, Cumhuriyet: Chadored women members of the main opposition party CHP resigned from the party on Wednesday after party leaders refused to nominate the wmoens' preferred candidate for Mayor in Istanbul's Eyup district. Realizing that the chador failed to work out for his party, CHP leader Deniz Baykal extended support Kocaeli mayoral candidate, Sefa Sirmen who promised Quran Courses for his district. Baykal said the offering of Quran courses will prevent children from joining religious sects. Liberal Radikal in a banner headline says "The CHP is Opening a Very Dangerous Door" and notes that reaction came from members of other parties saying "Baykal is manipulating religion for politics."

Minister Celik Protested in Van
Mainstream Sabah and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet report that a shoemaker named Cetin Isik threw a shoe at Education Minister Huseyin Celik while he was attending the inauguration of AKP's election campaign in Van. While Celik was addressing the residents of Van about AKP's services to Van, Isik yelled "there are no services in Van" and threw a shoe at the Minister.

President Gul Visits Saudi Arabia
Media outlets report President Abdullah Gul, in Saudi Arabia on a state visit, on Wednesday addressed the Saudi Consultative Council, becoming the first Muslim leader to address the Saudi Assembly. Gul said both Turkey and Saudi Arabia were working to resolve the biggest threat for an independent Palestinian state, i.e. the disagreements between the Palestinian groups. He emphasized Turkey's main priority was the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the region.

Editorial Commentary: Erdogan's 'Double-Standard' Reaction to Israel and Darfur

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "PM Erdogan presents a clear double standard on human rights by strongly standing against Israel's Gaza operation while hosting Sudanese leaders and saying

nothingabout Darfur. One wonders if Erdogan's silence on Darfur stems from a sympathy to the Sudan regime's Islamist fundamentalist character."

AKP Gives Families Household Goods before Municipal Elections
Media outlets report that prior to the municipal elections in late March, the governor's office and seven provincial governors kicked off an aid campaign for distributing white household goods (refrigerators, washers, etc.) to 3,330 families in the eastern province of Tunceli. Business daily Referans reports the ruling AKP government had projected the municipalities' 2008 budget to be 15 billion lira, but actually gave the municipalities 770 million extra lira. The IMF is uneasy with the extra funds transferred to municipalities, the majority of them held by AKP mayors, on the eve of municipal elections, says Referans.

PJAK Declared a Terrorist Organization
Mainstream Vatan reports, "Obama Comes to Office and Work Changes," as "PJAK is placed on the terror list." Vatan notes, "Obama said he was doing this for the protection of the Turkish people, but the effects of this action also signify the Obama administration's interest in warming relations with Iran." CNN Turk notes, "Iranian security forces have also fought with PJAK forces from time to time." NTV calls the move, "A PKK Message from the U.S. to Turkey," as "The U.S. declares the Iran wing of PKK a terrorist organization."

'Armenian Resolution at Doorstep' (Cumhuriyet)
Cumhuriyet, Milliyet, Hurriyet and Radikal report Mark Kirk, the head of Armenian caucus in the U.S. Congress, told the Armenian

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National Committee of America (ANCA) that swift action needs to be taken regarding the approval of Armenian genocide resolution at the Congress. "Departments of State and Defense have always opposed us on the issue, and defended time was not right for the adoption of a genocide resolution, therefore it would be best if we act immediately," said Kirk.

Editorial Commentary on AGR; Israel

Hasan Cemal wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "There will be serious consequences if and when an Armenian genocide resolution passes from the Congress. First of all, it will create a very negative impact on American efforts in the region. More importantly it will give Turkey's nationalists and radical Islamists more power which will alienate Turkey from the Western club eventually."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "Turkey has to acknowledge and cope with problems related to xenophobia and anti-Turkish people's reaction to Gaza should not flow into anti-Semitic feelings."

Russia's Military Base Game with the U.S. (Taraf)
Mainstream Sabah reports, "Kyrgyzstan Closes a Base Used by the U.S. in the War in Afghanistan," after "Bakiyev announced he's reached an economic agreement with Russia." CNN Turk reports, "Kyrgyz President Bakiyev says he will close a critical U.S. air base after securing a vital rescue package worth over \$2 billion from Russia." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak calls the move, "A Military Base Coup Against the U.S." Leftist Taraf calls the move "Russia's Military Base Game with the U.S." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Kyrgyzstan Puts the Locks on the U.S. Military Base."

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Nabucco director Reinhard Mitschek said yesterday in Ankara that Turkey and the Nabucco pipeline needed each other, stressing there were no plans for building the pipeline without the participation of Turkey.

- On Friday, more than 40 CHP parliamentarians will go to Istanbul to support Kemal Kilicdaroglu in his campaign for municipal

elections.

- Opposition CHP MP Esfender Korkmaz submitted a proposal for freezing the housing debt payments of people who lost their jobs after July 2008.
- Turkish automotive sector reports foreign trade deficit for the first time in three years.

International News

- The Economist says "Doing an Erdogan" was the best Davos catchphrase for hissy fit, after Turkey's PM Erdogan stormed out of a panel meeting with Shimon Peres.
- U.S. VP Joseph Biden will join the annual Wehrkunde conference on security policy in Munich, which will become the first platform for a meeting of Turkish officials with the Obama administration.
- The Times reports President Obama is working toward a new nuclear non-proliferation agreement with Russia that could see both countries cut their stock of missiles to 1,000 warheads per country.

JEFFREY